

College Preparation Checklist

12th Grade

All Year

- ❑ Keep taking classes that challenge you. Most colleges require 4 years of English, at least 3 years of social studies (history, civics, geography, economics, etc.), 3 years of mathematics, and 3 years of science, and many require 2 years of a foreign language. Round out your course load with classes in computer science and the arts.
- ❑ Update your portfolio. (A portfolio might include awards, game tapes, newspaper clippings, artwork, etc.)
- ❑ Work hard all year; second-semester grades can affect scholarship eligibility.
- ❑ Stay involved and seek leadership roles in your activities.

Fall

- ❑ Meet with your school counselor: are you on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements?
- ❑ If you haven't done so already, register for and take exams such as the SAT I, SAT II: Subject Test, or ACT for college admission.* Check with the colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require.
- ❑ Apply to the colleges you have chosen. Prepare your application carefully. Follow the instructions, and PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO DEADLINES!
- ❑ Well before your application deadlines, ask your counselor and teachers to submit required documents (e.g., transcript, letters of recommendation) to the colleges to which you're applying.
- ❑ To prepare to apply for federal student aid, be sure to get a PIN at www.pin.ed.gov so that you can complete your application and access your information online. One of your parents must also get a PIN.

Winter

- ❑ Encourage your parent(s) to complete income tax forms early. If your parent(s) have not completed the tax forms, you can provide estimated information on your federal student aid application, but remember to make any necessary changes later.

- ❑ As soon after January 1 as possible, complete and submit your *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA), along with any other financial aid applications your school(s) of choice may require. You can complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov or on paper, but completing the application online is faster and easier. You should submit your FAFSA by the earliest financial aid deadline of the schools to which you are applying, usually by early February.
- ❑ If you have questions about the federal student aid programs or need assistance with the application process, call **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)** or TTY for the hearing-impaired, **1-800-730-8913**.
- ❑ After you submit the FAFSA, you should receive your *Student Aid Report* (SAR) within one to four weeks. Quickly make any necessary corrections and submit them to the FAFSA processor.
- ❑ If the schools you are applying to require it, complete the CSS Profile. Many private colleges and universities use this information to help them award nonfederal student aid funds.
- ❑ Complete scholarship applications. Apply for as many as you can—you may be eligible for more than you think.
- ❑ Parents should check their eligibility for the Hope Credit, Lifetime Learning Credit or other tax benefits.

Spring

- ❑ Visit colleges that have invited you to enroll.
- ❑ Review your college acceptances and compare financial aid packages.
- ❑ When you decide which school you want to attend, notify that school of your commitment and submit any required financial deposit. Many schools require this notification and deposit by May 1.

*Remember: Register for all tests in advance and be sure to give yourself time to prepare appropriately. If you have difficulty paying a registration fee, see your school counselor about getting a fee waiver.